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***DOH-Miami-Dade Recognizes Asthma Awareness Month***

**Contact:**

Communications Office  
786-336-1276

**Miami, Fla.** – The Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County recognizes May as Asthma Awareness Month along with May 2nd as World Asthma Day.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 24 million people, including over 6 million children, have asthma. Asthma is a chronic disease that affects the airways in the lungs and continues to be a serious public health problem. Asthma is a leading cause of preventable emergency department visits, hospitalizations, school absenteeism and work-related lung disease in Florida. Asthma is more severe among children, women, and those whose household incomes are less than \$25,000.

“Asthma affects people of all ages and backgrounds. Every person with asthma should have a timely diagnosis, receive appropriate treatment, learn to manage their own asthma, and reduce exposure to environmental factors that make asthma worse,” said Dr. Lillian Rivera, RN, MSN, PhD, Health Officer/Administrator of the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County.

Asthma is a condition that affects the lungs and if not well managed can result in repeated episodes of coughing, wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, loss of sleep and even death. Individuals can manage their asthma by knowing what may trigger an asthma attack and the physical warning signs of an attack. Common triggers include second-hand smoke, mold, dust mites, pet dander, cockroaches, pollen, strong odors, colds and flu, and in some instances exercise, stress, cold air and certain foods. When asthma sufferers know their triggers, they are able to avoid these elements and reduce the likelihood of an attack.

Although asthma cannot be cured, it is critical to take the necessary steps to reduce asthma attacks. Successful management includes knowing the warning signs of attack, avoiding things that may trigger an episode and following the advice of your healthcare provider.

In support of Asthma Awareness Month, the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County’s Healthy Homes & Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (HHLPPP) will distribute asthma related educational materials and will provide asthma education to the parents/guardians at different health centers to increase asthma awareness.

Further information regarding asthma awareness can be found at the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County’s website [www.miamidade.floridahealth.gov](http://www.miamidade.floridahealth.gov) or by calling 305-470-6877.

**About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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